

### **REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments made above and the remarks that follow.

A petition and fee for an extension of time of two months are attached hereto. Also attached is a terminal disclaimer to obviate the double patenting rejection in view of applicant's prior patent 6,632,471.

It is noted that original claim 14, directed to placing a plurality of articles loosely in a chamber for treatment, was not rejected on prior art other than the double patenting rejection.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to call for placing the article loosely in a chamber for exposure to an oxidizing agent introduced into the chamber; and new claim 17, dependent from claim 1, has been added to further require a plurality of the articles to be placed loosely in the chamber.

Independent claim 9 has been amended to limit the oxidizing agent to about 5%, by volume, of the gaseous mixture, and to define the gaseous mixture as being at a temperature of about 72 °F and a pressure of about 14.7 psi, and for the period of time of exposure to be about three minutes.

Neither the process of amended claim 1 nor the process of amended claim 9 are taught by Homsy (3,992,221). In Homsy, each individual article is fixed on a hanger 24, and fluorine gas is introduced through the hanger into the interior of the article. The gas is under pressure sufficient to extend the article by at least 10%, and for a ratio of fluorine to the mixture of 1:10, the time of exposure is about one hour at a temperature of at least 100 °F.

In the present invention as claimed in claim 1 the article is placed loosely in the chamber and the gaseous mixture is introduced into the chamber, not the article. This is patentably distinct from the teaching of Homsy, wherein each individual article is fixed to a hanger, and the gaseous mixture is introduced into the article, not the chamber.

In the present invention as claimed in claim 9, for a ratio of oxidizing agent to gaseous mixture of about 1:20 the time of exposure is only about three minutes at a temperature of about

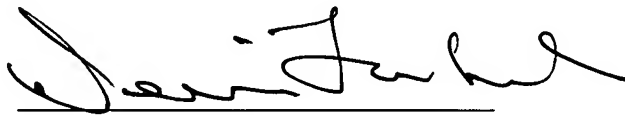
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72 °F and pressure of 14.7 psi. These process parameters are drastically different from the process parameters in Homsy, wherein even for a much greater concentration of oxidizing agent, the pressure, temperature and time of exposure are significantly different. For example, for an exposure time of three minutes, Homsy uses a mixture having a concentration of 1:2, whereas in applicant's process the exposure time is only three minutes for a mixture concentration of 1:20. Accordingly, claim 9 is believed to be patentably distinct over the teaching of Homsy.

The remaining claims depend either directly or indirectly from one or the other of claims 1 and 9, and therefore patentably distinguish over the prior art for the same reasons as those claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis H. Lambert", written over a horizontal line.

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